

1-2003

janB2003

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janB2003" (2003). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 884.  
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## **DAY OF SLATE**

What can be said  
that knows itself  
better than to say

Facing the twist  
left in the snow  
by melt freeze melt  
wind scour renew

I say this is muscle  
is meant for you  
to hold to the fact  
as if there were one  
or I knew

Carve a seal  
killer whale  
the tusk of mud  
by time  
that's all it took  
pressed sharp

into the south  
of a country  
not where wine  
but a sleep  
all afternoon  
woke just  
the light was leaving

I keep bringing  
you things  
you have no need for

songs you've heard  
before, small  
animals who run away

leave their paw prints  
until the weather  
reads them away

Don't tell me  
we carved a sign  
to mean I own  
this thing

the sign meant  
still means  
read me  
tell me who I am

12 Nivose CCXI

2 January 2003

## **[COLORS OF DREAM]**

the blue we see in Gothic windows, the blue in Russian frescoes, the red in Van Eyck's robe, the end of something, no technique, no *technê*, led to the production of such visions,

for us to see them, they had to be suggested, projected, verbally or musically or directly from mind to mind, and the hearer had to become the beholder through the work of imagining,

it is up to us

**Head work  
all the bright colors  
lithographed in your lap.**

3 January 2003

[dreamed]

## SNOW

The squirrel upside down  
clutches onto the bird feeder  
doesn't flinch when I come close,  
looks straight back over his shoulder  
at me, and goes on eating.

His fur is coated with snow,  
dazzled with wet crystals.  
Bold and desperate thief,  
he knows the policy  
correct for days like this.

Like ours.  
And they say another foot  
of snow is coming tonight

winds and the broken  
branches cleared away  
whirling crystals around your skin  
around our bones we walked outside  
crunch of old snow beneath the new

Squirrel feeding.  
Feeding squirrels.  
Writer writing.  
Any being  
is free to turn  
away from skill,  
there's no law that makes us write.

(Though H.D. once heard her Muse say “Write, write or die.”)

The world needs such sincerity and clarity as we know how summon from the things we see, or that summon us. To say.

In writing, discrepancies of age, situation, involvements with other people, metabolism, desire, economics, career, all are erased and we are equals.

3 January 2003

## WINTER SPIDERS.

Poetry messengers.

Little bites you wake with,  
something about them,  
sly and waiting  
in the most intimate.  
Forgive their little bites.

Name for a poetry magazine:

*L'araignée d'hiver*  
— the secrecy of poetry,  
subtle toxins,  
sly itch of reminding,

its quiet ability to leave a mark  
on even the toughest hide,  
to dwell secretly in bed and  
shadow and intimate places,  
to do its work in the night,  
in sleep, in dream.

3 January 2003



## TEA

Alone with my cup of tea.

—Christ, what role are you playing at now?

Not a role. I am alone, it is a c. of t.

— I see that, but why say so?

It's true.

— But saying so, that's what makes it a role, and you someone playing it.

Should I just be quiet?

— Speaking implies audience.

You.

— I'm here, I see you, I see the cup of tea. And since I'm here, I know that alone is not exactly true. And so it's a role, et cetera.

What if I just like the sound of words?

— Then they're not words. Other people hearing them is what makes them words. Otherwise they're just sounds. You love the sound of sounds.

3 January 2003

## BEING RECALCITRANT

being recalcitrant  
is not the same as being in control

there is a shape  
to saying no

smells like fish and chips  
or ginger ale at your aunt's house

everybody's a Methodist  
and God is watching

there is so much to discover  
my eyes hurt from the snow

the no sleep the thick book  
the alphabet hurts me

2.

there is a woman on the stairs  
a girl behind me

what can a young man do  
at any age

the treads are measured  
seven inch risers

my eyes forget all their numbers  
the snow remembers

the exercycle we are giving to a friend  
stands naked to the snow

the weather is our only news  
the rest is dreamwork

the anger of our stars inside  
the comfort of your fantasy

every item that I notice  
is good for you to know

the lunatic details of everyday  
made up of birds

cataloguing seed in the feeder  
relax we all have preferences

this kind of wren likes Mahler  
and blue jays are absolute Stravinsky

cherubim keep you waiting  
seraphim scorch your collar

love makes you wet your pants  
that's what any child knows

the body's always up to something  
and the drunken innkeeper seldom knows

what antic escapades  
fizzle in his rear bedrooms

3.

who is it in me  
that makes the light come on

answer the phone for bird's sake  
impenetrable music of causality

you studied it every Saturday night  
preparing for Holy Communion

I believed everything I still do  
I look into the rubble of my feelings

deciding which is good and which is stuff  
I should report to a higher authority

I keep a book of it  
in case I meet her someday

the testament of truth  
with photos pasted in

no myth misses me  
keeping the holy at bay

4.

say all writ is holy

say figure this out

say I'm too busy to know what I'm saying

say I can never tell what you're thinking

say I can't ever know what you're hearing

say nobody gives me a right to say

say whatever comes into my head

say this isn't about you

say this isn't about me

say this isn't about us

say this is about heads and what comes into them

say weren't you listening

say that's not my job

say my job is shaping the flow so it looks like your body

say my job is making it touch you

say my job is making it let go

say I have a fireman's thick hose

say I douse the fires of silence

say there's always more where this comes from

say when you're at the boundaries of language you turn a new leaf.

4 January 2003

## HYMN TO USE

Using someone else's  
using their object  
given to you or allowed

or using their way of using  
something object or procedure  
using someone else's using

someone using someone else  
using something even small  
it warms the mind in using

or touch this thing  
makes someone else  
so close makes someone

someone else you touch  
in touching in using this object  
or procedure someone

else cannot object  
to using someone something  
given or allowed

using someone else's  
someone else to touch  
someone's else

someone's other way or place  
they are themselves  
you are their else

to touch or borrow or allow.

This way things carry their people out into the world of other people and no one sleeps.  
This way the thing is ensouled and learns how to talk, as we do, one situation at a time.  
Everything is its mother. Later on, the thing becomes a nurse that comforts us.

5 January 2003

## HYMN FOR A NOVENA TO CHARLES FOURIER

But can it speak when I listen  
can the glorious Revolution  
understand itself without a wheel?

No blade and no guillotine  
a party of like-minded revelers  
lunching naked on the lawn

while the king is out of town on other business.  
Who tracks desire?  
Are you waiting?

Where did the color go  
when the flower died?  
Any child knows enough to ask you that

and nobody expects an answer,  
no more than the grass, no more than the ants  
who walk out slowly just to watch the clouds go past.

5 January 2003



## **AN EXPLANATION**

Why understanding isn't empathy  
has to do with the rulership of signs.  
Understanding is Saturn, empathy  
is Venus, they are not friends  
in our local sky, though there are planets,  
I come from one, where they sleep  
together every night and Mars is dead.

So be clear about the signs. You,  
you be a sign of me. You  
with your ordinary eyes,  
the hoofbeat in my chest  
that tells me to be honest, tells me  
every bell is a piece of the sky  
that rings my funeral, I am dead  
to heaven and born to here,

a heartbeat does it, a heartbeat  
tells it, life is where the honesty  
happens, deep drowned in the cloaca  
where such as we can live.

5 January 2003

## **LACVNA**

something missing from the alphabet

what peak of departure

rapture

of indecision, who

makes up new letters

who says new things

a sound that has meaning bloody inside it

phonemic alphabet

in Zion they made us write with silent sounds

a leftover word

broken cabbages smashed beet roots in a farmers' strike

only the rot will let our answer through

a new word left over from now

a sense of men arrayed against the enemy

sun glare and broken glass

a mirror set up in the desert

the war

the word waiting

from before we learned to speak

and nothing left to be.

5 January 2003

## THE RETURN

Can some come back or something be waiting?

his beard grows through the table  
stone only looks like stone

it is a slow song  
of something keeping still

it hides its movement

and any moment can be interrupted  
by the silence of long systems

the king stands up again  
and from the lake Lord Lotus rises

but we must be silent so they come  
and her long hair blows out among the stars now  
and seems no more personal than the weather

but when we wake  
and all the molecular music stops  
we will be her arms again  
and reach all things together

I am my father, I still see justice  
as something I can do or make or help

persuaded as I am that sunrise  
also needs some help from me  
because we all have sing silence together.

6 January 2003